

HED environmental engineer named Federal Employee of the year 2000

Story and photos by Alexander Kufel

Among thousands of selfless employees of the federal government, there are always a few who stand head and shoulders above the crowd. This year the judges panel of the Honolulu-Pacific Federal Executive Board directed their attention to HED and found what they were looking for. At the annual awards luncheon June 8 at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel, environmental engineer Dan Nakamura was named federal employee of the year 2000 in the professional, administrative and technical category.

Nakamura is being recognized for his efforts to protect human health and the environment in a manner that established precedents for others to follow. The citation notes that he saved the government \$15 million in fiscal-year 1999 and is being recognized for forming "strategic alliances in building environmentally conscious technologies that bring Hawaii closer to self-sustainability."

While the immediate response throughout both the Division and the District was jubilant, those familiar with Nakamura expressed satisfaction at his recognition rather than surprise.

"This is a wonderful moment for all of us," said POD Chief of Staff Col. Donald Pawlowski.

"I'm delighted that Dan was selected," said HED commander Lt. Col. Wally Z. Walters. "He truly exemplifies the type of employees of whom we

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The flower leis and the smile on Dan Nakamura's face clearly tell the story moments after his selection as Federal Employee of the Year (Professional, Administrative, Technical).

Final phase of HED office relocations begun

In retrospect, no one expected people to actually enjoy moving out of their long-term offices into different and decidedly decrepit spaces in a building scheduled for demolition. But, despite all the extra work involved, people from Emergency Management Division (EMD), Office of Counsel (OC), and Public Affairs (PAO) were heard saying that building T-1 had a "nice feel" about it, that they were enjoying the wide-open spaces of their temporary quarters, that they found themselves discussing more things with co-workers simply because it was easier to do so, and that it was too bad they had to leave.

Before this, moving for six to eight weeks had all the makings of a disaster about to happen. With two moves on the books for three workgroups before the middle of August, the potential

was intensified.

"Look at it this way," said deputy HED commander Maj. David Goddard, "A little inconvenience now will spare everyone from major inconvenience later. It's much better to avoid the dust and noise of construction and be already packed to move into the final spaces when the time comes than to suffer through the experience every day for several months."

And so it was that the ongoing game of "musical chairs" that required moving into building T-1 was necessary to allow for renovation of existing spaces in buildings 230 and 214 and also permitted efficient scheduling of the work to be done.

This time when the dust settles, Division offices will have

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Persuasion: *One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears—by listening to them.*
—Dean Rusk, American statesman, 1909-1994

District bids Aloha to outgoing Commander

Nearly 80 people turned out for lunch at the Hale Ikena on Fort Shafter on Wednesday, June 28 in an enthusiastic outpouring of farewells for Lt. Col. Wally Z. Walters upon completing a two-year tour of duty as the 61st District Engineer and Commander of Honolulu Engineer District. Gifts were presented by members of the various District work groups and Walters took the opportunity to recognize the achievements of some of HED's key players. Architect Gary Nip, EC-D, was master of ceremonies and project engineer Jerry Cornell, PP-C, led the invocation.--Alexander Kufel



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are most proud."

Nakamura has been with the District since 1993. Projects he has been involved with include the Army's establishment of water treatment plants wherever the chemical "trichlorethylene" is found in the local water supply, disposal of chemical waste at Johnston Island, and the establishment of a partnership between HED, the Pacific International Center for High Technology Research and the Univ. of Hawaii for developing sustainable technologies for Hawaii and the Asia Pacific Basin. He said that any successes he has had are largely as a result of his supervisors who gave him the opportunity to take chances and risk failure.

"Actually," said Nakamura. "You learn the most from your failures, but nothing feels as good as getting something right; especially if you can do that in concert with other people."

Concern for the environment plays a very important part in the decisions that Nakamura makes. He said that as a youngster growing up in Mountain View on the Big Island of Hawaii, nearness to Volcano National Park was an enormous influence.

"I got interested in nature by park-ranger friends and participated in bird surveys and plant surveys. I spent many wonderful hours counting endangered birds and plants," he said. It's no coincidence that earlier this spring, Nakamura gave up some Saturdays to participate in a DPW (Division of Public Works)-sponsored Earth Day trail improvement project in Poamoho near Wahiawa, and rallied co-workers to do the same. Twenty-five years later, Nakamura still keeps in touch with his ranger friends.

Debbie, Nakamura's wife, who also was at the awards luncheon, said that she knows how strongly Dan feels about things and is very aware of the extra time he takes to get things right.

Nakamura also was recipient of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' National Environmental Engineer of the Year award in 1998.



Dan Nakamura, EC-E, receives his award from Navy Capt. G.P. Caldwell, FEB Chair, and keynote speaker Larry Embley while HED Commander Lt. Col. Wally Walters looks on.